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THE MEN IN BLACK
ALL NEW ADVENTURES!
Lowell Cunningham
Sandy Carruthers

The Men In Black: Book II #2 • June 1991

LOWELL CUNNINGHAM
Writer
•
SANDY CARRUTHERS
Penciller
•
SCOTT DUTTON
Inker
•
TREVOR TAMLIN
Letterer
•
ADAM ADAMOWICZ
Cover Painting
•
Dave Olbrich
Publisher
•
Kim Scholter
Publishing Coordinator
•
Chris Ulm
Editor-In-Chief
•
Tom Mason
Creative Director
•
Dan Danko
Editor
•
Mickie Villa
Art Director

The most frequent question any writer ever hears is "Where do you get your ideas?" Usually it's hard to pin down a particular moment of inspiration, but this once I can tell you exactly where I got the idea for "The Ravening Man."

It was a nightmare. Literally.

The first scene of this issue is almost identical to a strange dream I experienced, except in my dream I was the victim (I was fortunate to wake up before its activity was taken to its conclusion.)

Some dreams you don't remember, others fade after a while, but this one was so vivid it stayed with me long enough for me to write down the details. And now the details have found their way into this story.

See you next time. Until then, sleep well.

—Lowell Cunningham

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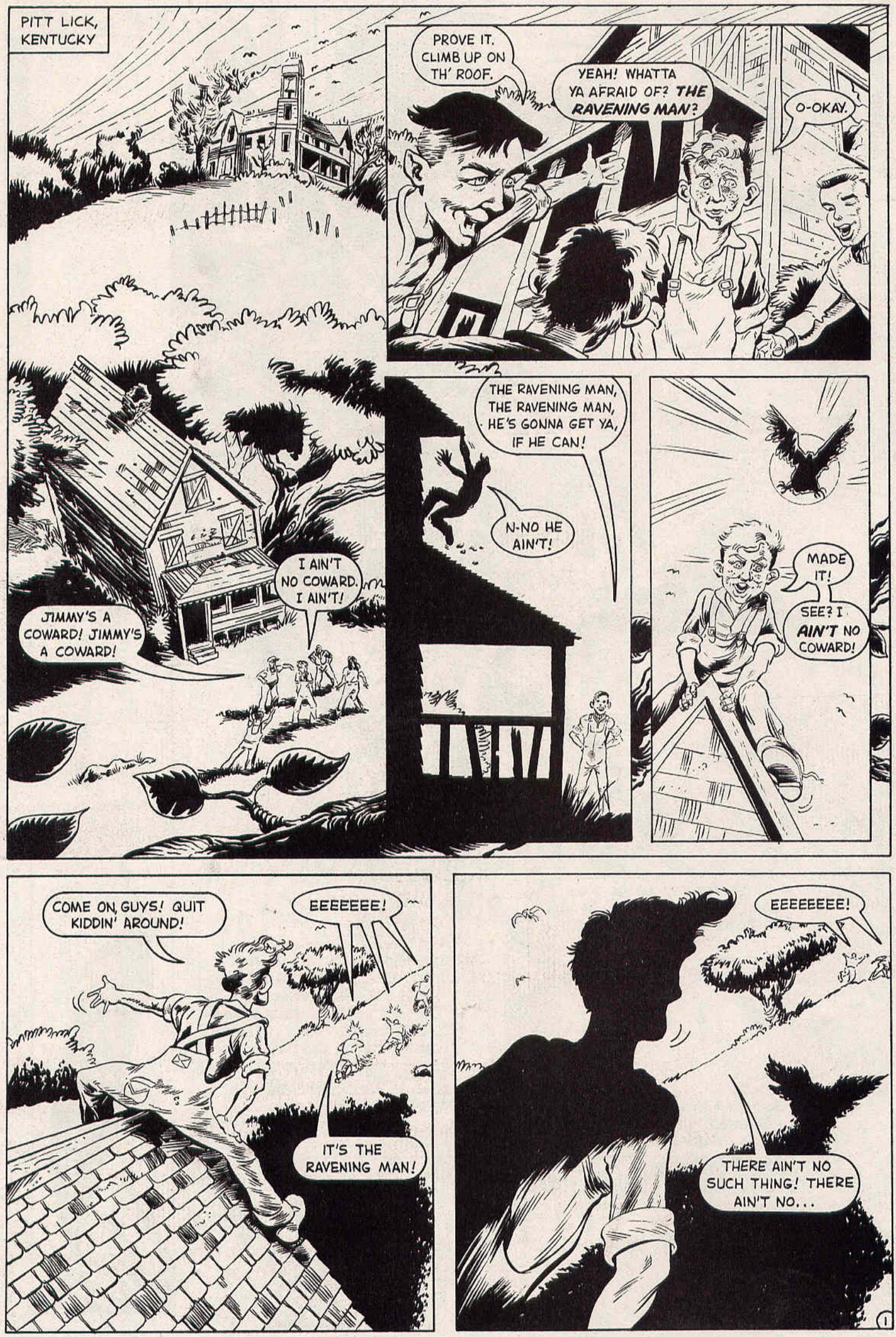
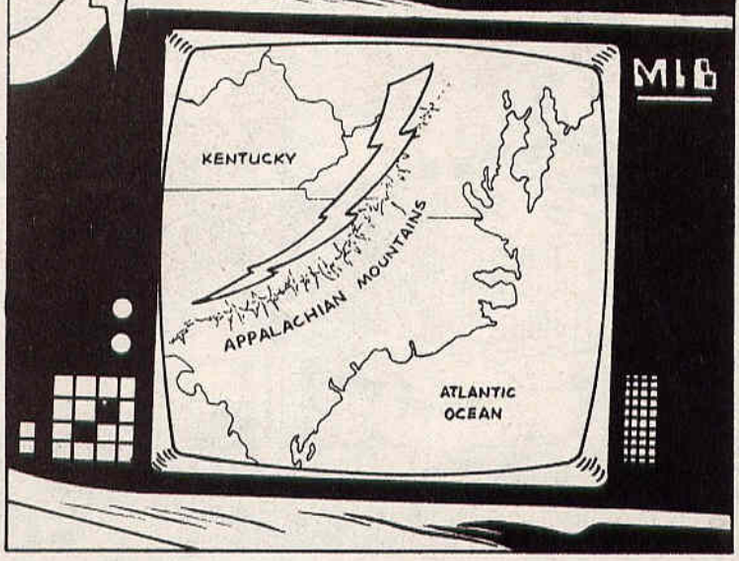

PITT LICK, KENTUCKY
PROVE IT. CLIMB UP ON TH' ROOF.
YEAH! WHATTA YA AFRAID OF? THE RAVENING MAN?
O-OKAY.
JIMMY'S A COWARD! JIMMY'S A COWARD!
I AIN'T NO COWARD. I AIN'T!
THE RAVENING MAN, THE RAVENING MAN, HE'S GONNA GET YA, IF HE CAN!
N-NO HE AIN'T!
MADE IT!
SEE? I AIN'T NO COWARD!
COME ON, GUYS! QUIT KIDDIN' AROUND!
EEEEEEE!
IT'S THE RAVENING MAN!
EEEEEEEE!
THERE AIN'T NO SUCH THING! THERE AIN'T NO...

THE RAVENING MAN!
KAW!
GAAAAH!
IN THE HILLS OF KENTUCKY, AMONG SOME SMALL TOWNS, THERE IS A LEGEND OF AN EVIL CREATURE WHICH WINGS ACROSS THE SKY, LOOKING FOR THE UNWARY. THE RAVENING MAN.
SOME SAY THE RAVENING MAN IS JUST A LIE, A STORY TO HELP KEEP THE YOUNG ONES ON THE STRAIGHT AND NARROW. OTHERS SAY THE STORIES ARE TRUE, DATING BACK TO THE TIME BEFORE SETTLERS MOVED WEST ACROSS THE LAND.
BUT EVERYONE AGREES ON ONE THING: HOW THE RAVENING MAN GOT HIS NAME. NOT FROM RAVEN, AS IN THE BIRD HE RESEMBLES, BUT FROM RAVENOUS, AS IN HUNGRY. VERY, VERY HUNGRY.
THE RAVENING MAN
2

NEARBY
PITT LICK
CITY LIMITS
RUUUMMM!
DAMN, KAY. DOES EVERY SMALL TOWN IN KENTUCKY HAVE THE WORD "LICK" IN ITS NAME?
JUST HALF. THE OTHER HALF HAVE THE WORD "KNOB."
REMEMBER THAT TOWN WE PASSED, "GOBBLER'S KNOB"?
THE FREUDIAN IMPLICATIONS ARE STAGGERING.
FREUD DIDN'T BRING US HERE. IT WAS JUNG.
HAVEN'T YOU READ YOUR OPERATIVE HANDBOOK?
NO. WHEN I REALIZED YOU WERE CONSIDERED THE IDEAL AGENT, I THREW IT AWAY.
SUIT YOURSELF. TRUST ME, THIS PLACE HAS A HISTORY.
ZED, WANT TO RUN THE FILE PAST JAY?
CERTAINLY, KAY.
3

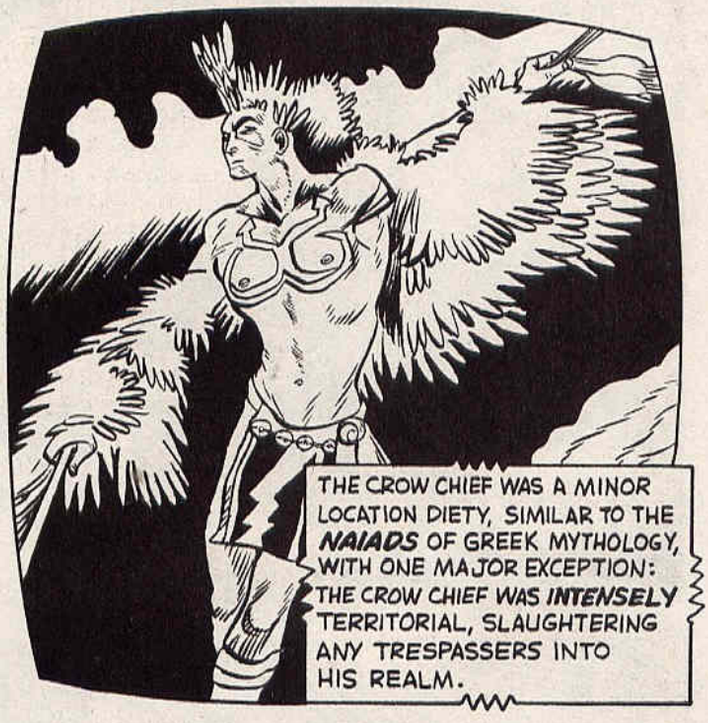
THE APPALACHIANS ARE THE OLDEST MOUNTAIN RANGE IN THE WORLD.

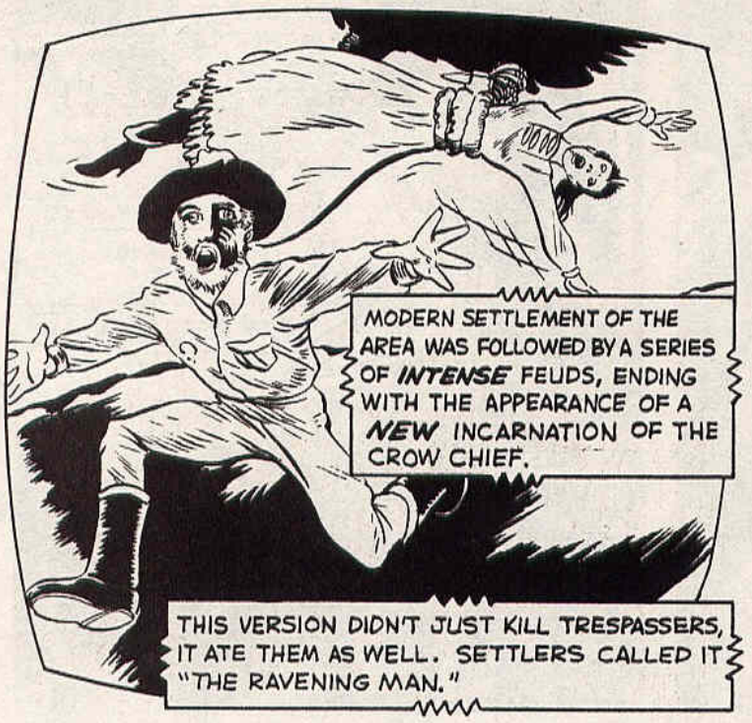
THEY ALSO OVERLAP A CURRENT OF ***MYSTICAL ENERGY*** SO POWERFUL THAT THE NATIONWIDE MAGIC DISSIPATION NETWORK CAN BARELY HANDLE IT.

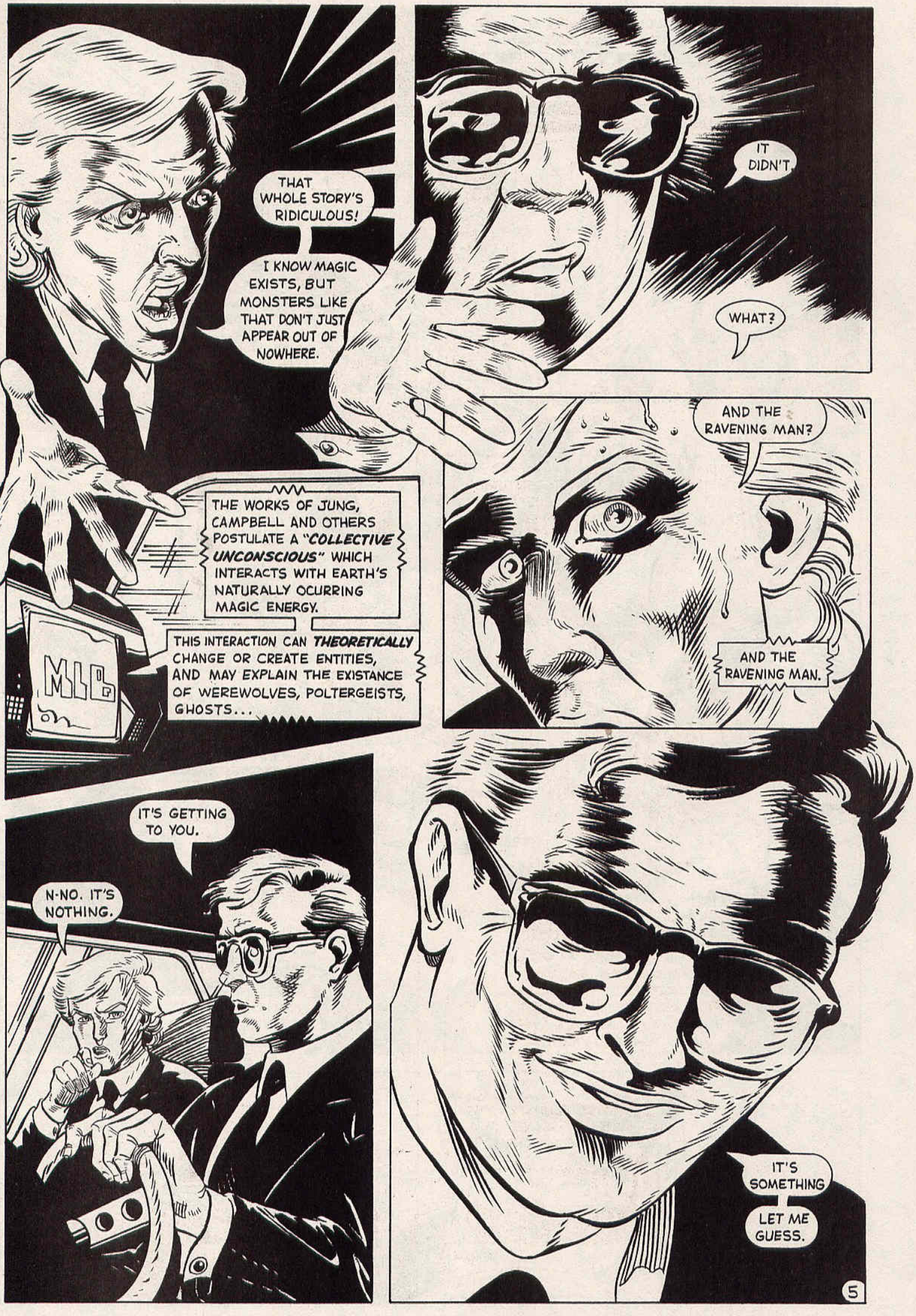


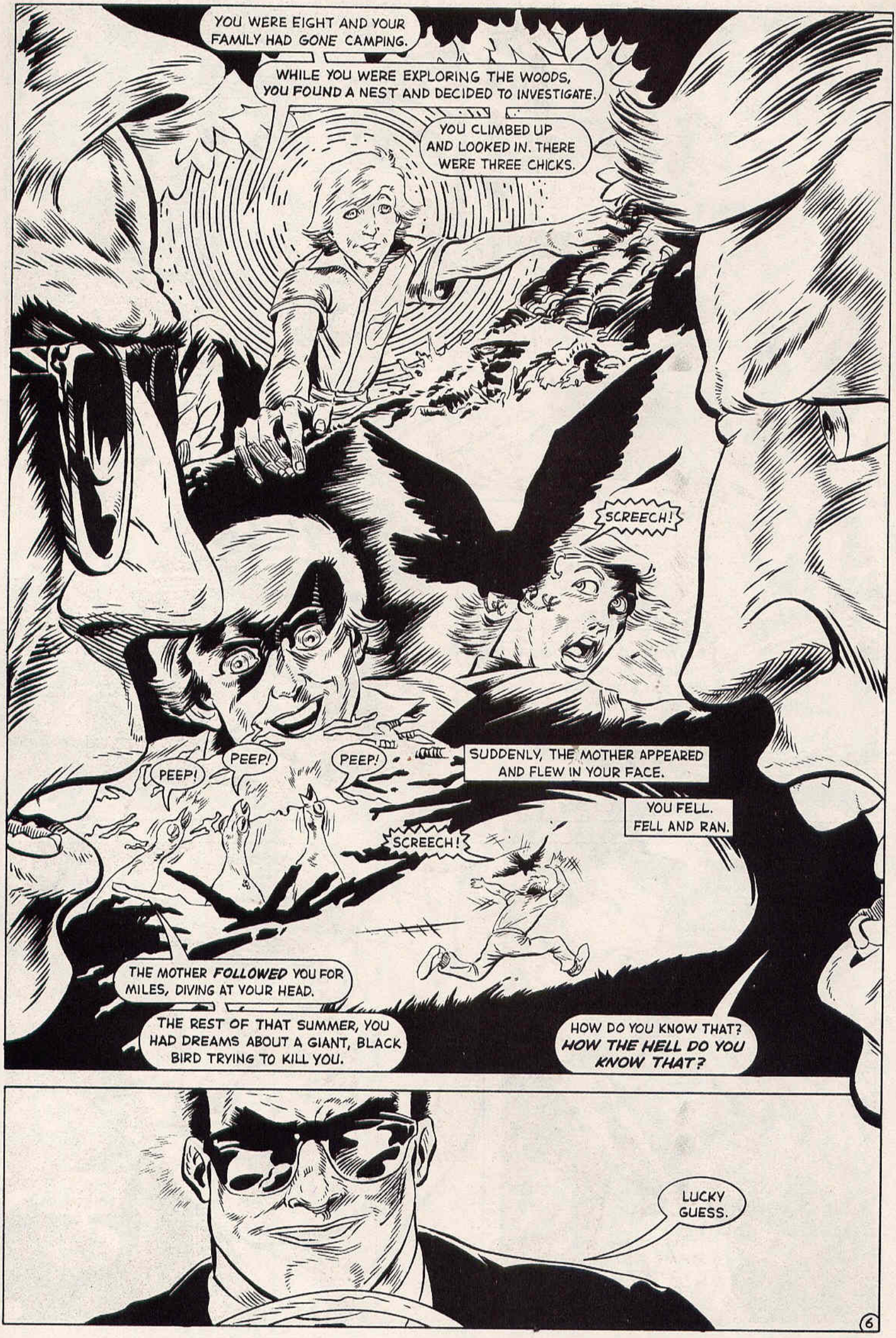
IN PRE-COLUMBIAN DAYS, THE AREA SURROUNDING PITT LICK WAS CLAIMED BY TWO ***RIVAL*** NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBES.

THEIR CONFLICT OVER THIS AREA LASTED CENTURIES, UNTIL THE APPEARANCE OF THE CROW CHIEF.


THE CROW CHIEF WAS A MINOR LOCATION DIETY, SIMILAR TO THE ***NAIADS*** OF GREK MYTHOLOGY, WITH ONE MAJOR EXCEPTION: THE CROW CHIEF WAS ***INTENSELY*** TERRITORIAL, SLAUGHTERING ANY TRESPASSERS INTO HIS REALM.


MODERN SETTLEMENT OF THE AREA WAS FOLLOWED BY A SERIES OF ***INTENSE*** FEUDS, ENDING WITH THE APPEARANCE OF A ***NEW*** INCARNATION OF THE CROW CHIEF.
THIS VERSION DIDN'T JUST KILL TRESPASSERS, IT ATE THEM AS WELL. SETTLERS CALLED IT "THE RAVENING MAN."


THAT WHOLE STORY'S RIDICULOUS!
I KNOW MAGIC EXISTS, BUT MONSTERS LIKE THAT DON'T JUST APPEAR OUT OF NOWHERE.
IT DIDN'T.
WHAT?
THE WORKS OF JUNG, CAMPBELL AND OTHERS POSTULATE A "COLLECTIVE UNCONSCIOUS" WHICH INTERACTS WITH EARTH'S NATURALLY OCURRING MAGIC ENERGY.
THIS INTERACTION CAN THEORETICALLY CHANGE OR CREATE ENTITIES, AND MAY EXPLAIN THE EXISTANCE OF WEREWOLVES, POLTERGEISTS, GHOSTS...
AND THE RAVENING MAN?
AND THE RAVENING MAN.
IT'S GETTING TO YOU.
N-NO. IT'S NOTHING.
IT'S SOMETHING
LET ME GUESS.


YOU WERE EIGHT AND YOUR FAMILY HAD GONE CAMPING.
WHILE YOU WERE EXPLORING THE WOODS, YOU FOUND A NEST AND DECIDED TO INVESTIGATE.
YOU CLIMBED UP AND LOOKED IN. THERE WERE THREE CHICKS.
SCREECH!
PEEP!
PEEP!
PEEP!
SUDDENLY, THE MOTHER APPEARED AND FLEW IN YOUR FACE.
YOU FELL. FELL AND RAN.
SCREECH!
THE MOTHER FOLLOWED YOU FOR MILES, DIVING AT YOUR HEAD.
THE REST OF THAT SUMMER, YOU HAD DREAMS ABOUT A GIANT, BLACK BIRD TRYING TO KILL YOU.
HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT? HOW THE HELL DO YOU KNOW THAT?
LUCKY GUESS.

WATCH THE FABRIC.
I NEVER TOLD ANYONE, DAMN IT! HOW DID YOU KNOW?
STOP THE CAR, KAY! STOP IT RIGHT NOW!
SURE. WE CAN TALK BETTER OUTSIDE.
TALKING'S NOT WHAT I HAD IN MIND!
TELL ME HOW YOU KNOW!
DAMN IT, KAY! GIVE ME A STRAIGHT ANSWER!
I KNOW EVERYTHING. YOU WOULD TOO, IF YOU EVER PAID ATTENTION.
WHEN YOU'RE READY.
NOW!
OOOOWWW!
WHAT'S THAT?
7

PAW! NO, PAW!
WHACK!
PLEASE, PAW, NO! I SEEN 'IM. I REALLY SEEN 'IM!
THERE AIN'T NO SUCH THING! SOMEBODY'S GOTTA TEACH YOU!
LOOKS LIKE THE KID'S GETTING A LITTLE OF WHAT I WAS ABOUT TO GIVE YOU.
SHUT UP, KAY.
THERE AIN'T NO RAVENING MAN! YOU TELL ME WHAT REALLY HAPPENED TO THE TYLER BOY!
THE RAVENING MAN GOT HIM. HONEST, PAW! I SEEN IT!
WHACK!
CALM DOWN, MISTER! WHAT'S GOING ON?
FAMILY BUSINESS, THAT'S WHAT! YOU JUST KEEP YOUR NOSE OUTTA GOIN'S ON BETWEEN MY BOY AND ME, YOU HEAR?
8

SORRY, I COULDN'T HELP OVERHEARING. YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT A PHENOMENON WE'VE BEEN SENT TO INVESTIGATE.
PHENOMENON? IS THAT WHAT YOU HIGH-AN'-MIGHTY FOLKS IN YOUR HUNNERD DOLLAR SUITS CALL IT? ROUND HERE, WE COME RIGHT OUT AND CALL IT A BALD-FACED LIE.
NOW GIT!
PLEASE, SIR, IF YOU COULD ONLY...
I DONE ASKED YOU POLITE!
NOW GIT!
WHACK!
OH, SHUT UP!
FASH!
FASH!
THAT'S ENOUGH, DAMN IT!
PAW!
9

YOU FINALLY DID THE RIGHT THING. I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU EVEN BOTHERED TRYING TO TALK.
CAN IT, KAY! YOU TAKE THE KID, I'LL QUESTION THE MAN.
SURE THING.
I LIKE IT WHEN YOU TALK TOUGH.
GOD, WHAT'VE I DONE?
I DON'T KNOW.
OH, YOU.
WHY DON'T YOU JUST TELL ME WHAT WAS GOING ON HERE?
OKAY.
IT'S THAT BOY OF MINE, COMIN' AROUND TELLIN' THOSE STORIES 'BOUT WHAT HE SEEN.
AN' THAT'S WITH US TRYING TO FIND THE TYLER BOY.
I TOL' HIM NOT TO BE TELLIN' STORIES ABOUT THE RAVENING MAN. I TOL' HIM.
I HAD T' TEACH HIM A LESSON, DIDN'T I? HAD T' TEACH HIM TO LISTEN TO HIS OLD MAN.

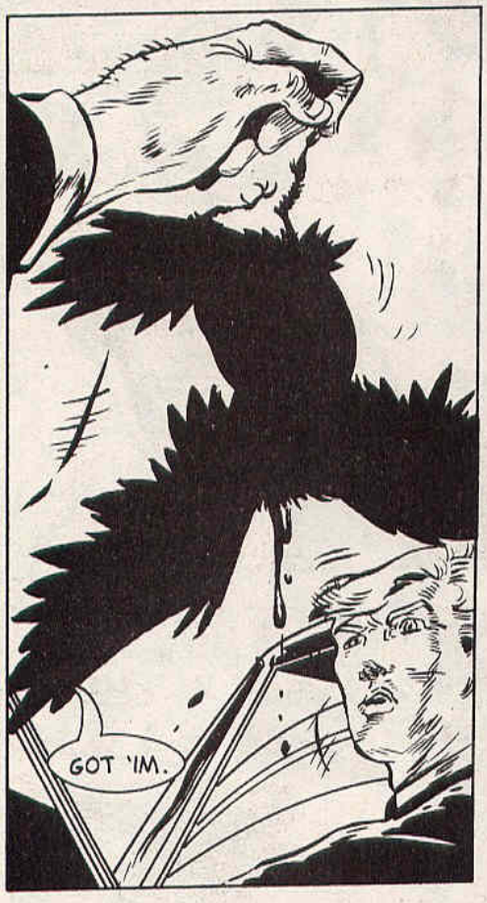
YOU DON'T BELIEVE IN THE RAVENING MAN, DO YOU?
NAW, THAT AIN'T IT.
I CAIN'T STAND THOSE STORIES 'CAUSE I KNOW HE'S REAL. I SEEN HIM, WHEN I WAS A KID, FLYIN' UP AROUND THE OLD PITT PLACE. HE SEEN ME, TOO!
HE CAME SWOOPIN' DOWN! ALMOST GOT ME!
NOW HE'S BACK. HE'S BACK AN' HE'S GOT THE TYLER BOY.
OH GOD! NOW HE'S GOT LITTLE JIMMY!
THAT'S ENOUGH. I WANT YOU TO GO ON WITH YOUR NORMAL BUSINESS AND FORGET EVERYTHING THAT JUST HAPPENED.
AND QUIT BEATING YOUR SON, OKAY?
OKAY.
ABOUT FINISHED, KAY?
IN A MINUTE.
THEN, WHEN YOU TURN NINETEEN, TAKE THE RIFLE TO THE TOP OF THE TALLEST BUILDING YOU CAN FIND AND DO THE SAME THING. GOT IT?
YES, SIR.

MOMENTS LATER.
WHAT WERE YOU TALKING TO THAT KID ABOUT, KAY?
CAREER STRATEGIES.
LIKE WE SAY, "TODAY'S CHILDREN ARE TOMORROW'S FOLLOWERS."
WAIT A MINUTE...
WHAT ARE WE LOOKING FOR, ANYWAY?
SOMETHING LIKE THIS.
MY GOD!
WELL, IF WE'RE LOOKING FOR EVIDENCE, WE'VE GOT IT. WHAT NOW?
WE GO TALK TO THE MAN WHO'S WATCHING US.
DAMN TRESPASSERS, GOIN' WHERE THEY OUGHTN'T! DAMN 'EM!
12

YOU THINK HE MAY HAVE SEEN SOMETHING?
MAYBE SEEN MAYBE DID.
HOW COULD HE HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH THIS?
SIMPLE. MAGIC'S LIKE A GUN. THE BIRD MONSTER IS THE BULLET. THAT MAN COULD BE PULLING THE TRIGGER.
YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO DRAW YOUR WEAPON JUST TO MAKE THAT POINT.
I DIDN'T.
WHAT!?
KAW!
BLAM BLAM
MY GOD!
13

THIS MAY NOT STOP HIM! GET MOVING!
BLAM!
MY GOD...
I SAID "MOVE IT!"
GOD...
NOW!
BLAM!
KAAAWWW!

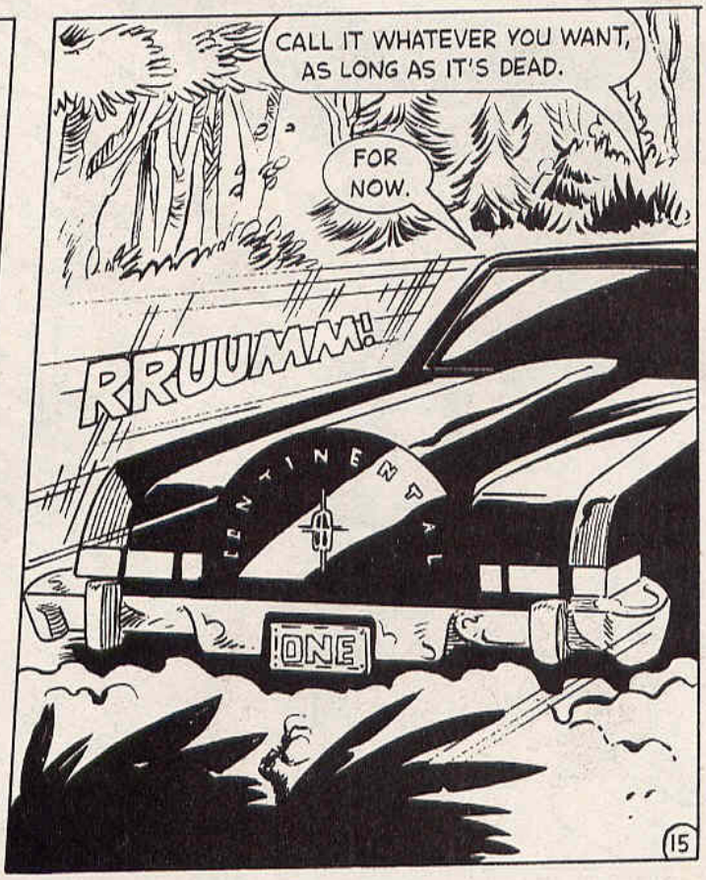
oh god!
oh god...


GOT 'IM.

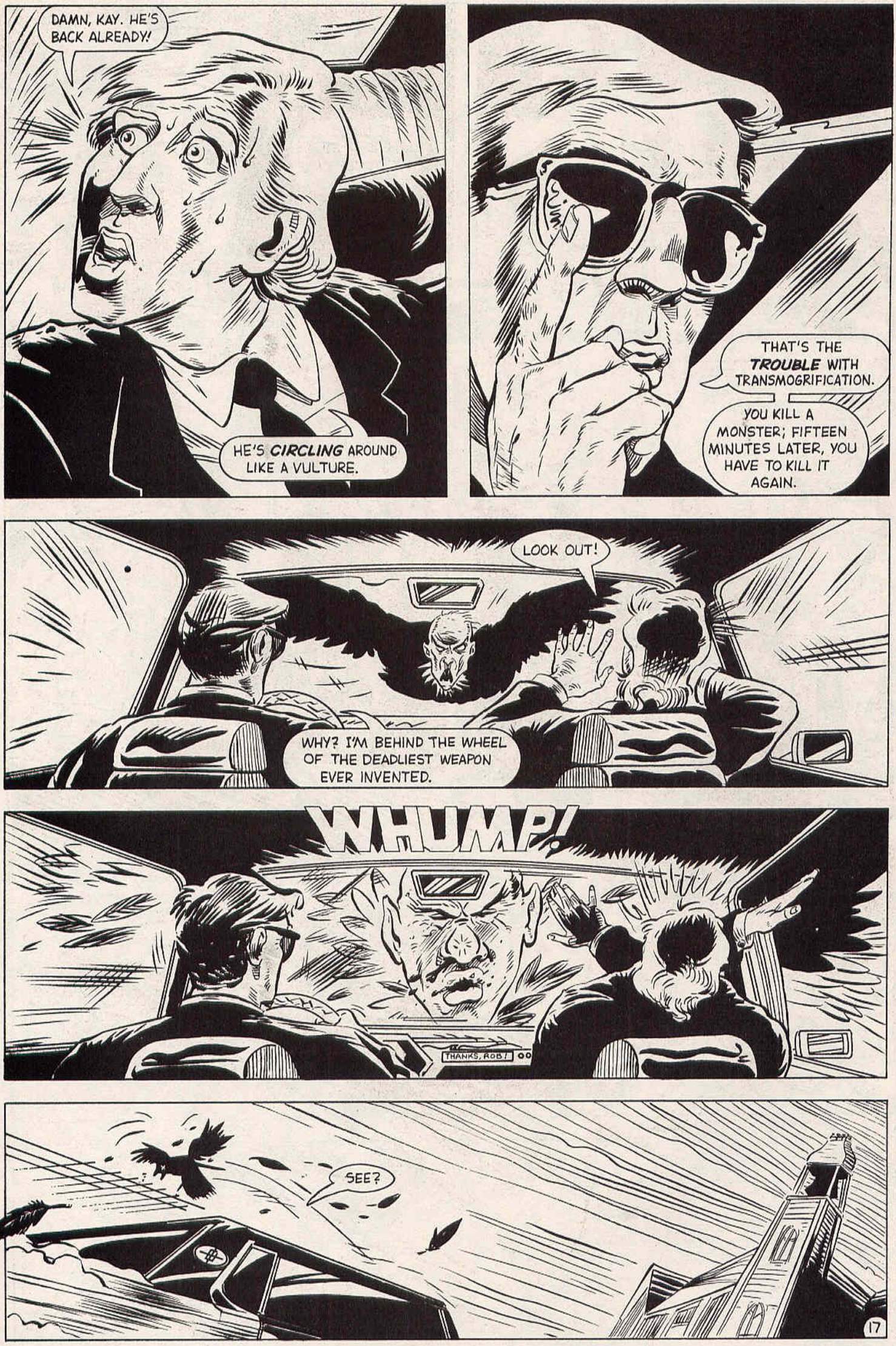
THAT'S JUST A CROW! IT CAN'T BE THE THING THAT ATTACKED US.
WANNA BET? HAVEN'T YOU EVER HEARD OF TRANSMOGRIFICATION?

TRANS-WHAT?
MOVE OVER, I'LL DRIVE.

TRANSMOGRIFICATION IS THE CHANGE OF A PHYSICAL OBJECT BY MAGIC.
WHAT THAT MEANS IS, I WAS RIGHT.


CALL IT WHATEVER YOU WANT, AS LONG AS IT'S DEAD.
FOR NOW.
RRUUMM!
ONE

FOR NOW? YOU MEAN IT'LL BE BACK?
PROBABLY. WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO DEFUSE THE SITUATION FIRST.
I HOPE SO.
THAT THING GOT TO YOU.
Y-YEAH, GUESS IT HAPPENS TO EVERY AGENT SOONER OR LATER
NEVER HAPPENED TO ME.
RRUUUMM!
16


DAMN, KAY. HE'S BACK ALREADY!
HE'S *CIRCLING* AROUND LIKE A VULTURE.
THAT'S THE *TROUBLE* WITH TRANSMOGRIFICATION.
YOU KILL A MONSTER; FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER, YOU HAVE TO KILL IT AGAIN.
LOOK OUT!
WHY? I'M BEHIND THE WHEEL OF THE DEADLIEST WEAPON EVER INVENTED.
WHUMP!
THANKS, ROB!
SEE?

SOON...
WE'RE SURE CUTTING DOWN THE CROW POPULATION.
AT LEAST THE FARMERS WILL LIKE US.
PITT
CUT THE CHATTER. WE'VE GOT WORK TO DO.
WAIT A SECOND. WHAT IF THAT THING COMES BACK? DON'T WE NEED ONE OF THOSE BIG GUNS?
KNOCK
KNOCK
NOT THIS TIME.
I'VE GOT IT COVERED.
MR. PITT?
AGENTS MART AND BIRD, KENTUCKY BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION. WE'DE LIKE A FEW WORDS WITH YOU.
I DON'T CARE WHO THE HELL YOU ARE, GET OFF MY PROPERTY!
LET ME REPHRASE THAT...
FASH!

MOVE ON BACK! COMIN' THROUGH!
EASY, KAY.
TELL US EVERYTHING YOU KNOW ABOUT THE RAVENING MAN.
AND CALL ME "SIR".
I SEEN 'IM A TIME OR TWO, AND I HEAR TELL HE ONLY ATTACKS FOLKS WHO'VE GOT THEIR NOSES WHERE THEY GOT NO RIGHT TO BE.
I RECKON THAT MAKES 'IM ALL RIGHT WITH ME. SIR.
WHAT? DON'T WE NEED SOME SORT OF PHYSICAL EVIDENCE TO MAKE THAT KIND OF CONNECTION?
THAT DOES IT FOR ME. THE RESEMBLENCE; THE ATTITUDE. WE'VE GOT OUR MAN.
WE COULD CHECK UPSTAIRS.
SOUNDS GOOD.
IF YOU'RE SCARED, I COULD GO FIRST.

I'LL GO FIRST!
GOD, I WISH YOU'D GIVE THE MACHO ACT A REST!
IT'S NOT AN ACT.
AND YOU MIGHT WANT TO DRAW YOUR WEAPON.
WHY? WHAT DO YOU THINK IS UP THERE?
I DON'T KNOW. THAT'S WHY I'M GOING TO BE PREPARED.
YEAH. GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT.
READY?
"BORN THAT WAY."
20

JESUS, THAT SMELL!
THE SMELL OF DEATH.
THAT MONSTER... HE BRINGS HIS VICTIMS HERE.
YEAH. ROOSTS WHERE HE EATS, TOO.
THIS MUST'VE BEEN THE TYLER BOY'S.
PROBABLY. LET ME GIVE YOU A LITTLE ADVICE, THOUGH...
CRASH!
KAW!
NEVER PUT YOUR BACK TO A WINDOW.
21

KA-BLAM!
KAW!
AAAAAAAHHHH!
KAY!
YEAH?
SURE THING. HOLD 'IM STEADY.
KAY!
KAAAAWWW!
DO SOMETHING!
KAAAAAWWW!
HEEEEELP!
SKRASH!
HANG ON. I'LL GO TAKE CARE OF THIS.
GO!?!
22

KAY!
KRAAAAWW!
DO SOMETHING...
HELP...
23

OKAY, PITT, CALL HIM OFF.
CALL WHO OFF ? UH, SIR.
THE RAVENING MAN. YOU'RE THE FOCUS, YOU CONTROL HIM.
HE'S GOT MY PARTNER. NOW CALL HIM OFF!
NO, SIR.
NO!?!
THAT FELLA WENT WHERE HE OUGHTN'T. DAMN TRESPASSER! HE DESERVES WHATEVER HE GETS.
SO DO YOU, SIR.
KER-RASH!
KAY!
SKWAAAAA!
24

YOU SAID...
YOU WERE...
GOING TO...
DO SOMETHING!
ONLY ONE THING TO DO. YOU'RE NOT GOING TO LIKE IT.
I DON'T CARE... WHAT IT IS!
JUST DO IT!
OKAY! YOU ASKED FOR IT.
BAM!
WHUMP!
25

YOU SHOT HIM! YOU SHOT A DEFENSELESS OLD MAN!
TOLD YOU YOU WOULDN'T LIKE IT.
BUT...
BUT NOTHING. PITT WAS THE CATALYST. NOW THAT HE'S GONE, SO IS THE RAVENING MAN. THE END.
THAT'S IT? YOU KILL A GUY AND JUST WALK AWAY?
YEP. WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO? STAY AND CLEAN UP?
HELL.
I HATE IT WHEN HE'S RIGHT.
NEXT: CONSEQUENCES...
26